

Lethe, at least, if not the rivers of Paradise. 'L'Hamour', indeed, as the most glittering of all the false jewels with which life tries to allure us, is a particular object of his scorn. A liaison may serve as a sort of armchair for occasional relaxation, when the pen drops from the writer's exhausted fingers; but lovers' ecstasies are ridiculous and degrading. 'Ces deux ans', he writes to his mistress, of Leconte de Lisle, 'passes dans l'absorption complete d'un amour heureux me paraissent une chose mediocre. Les estomacs qui trouvent en la ratatouille humaine leur assouissance ne sont pas larges. Si c'etait le chagrin en-core, bien! Mais la joie? Non! non!' The best thing in life, after all, is death. 'Quand on a tin peu d'huinanite, on ne peut s'empecher de souhaiter la mort a ceux qu'on aime. Et on dira que j'ai le coeur dur!'

There is in this animosity against all earthly things, all natural desires, more than a touch of the attitude of mediaeval Christianity in its more fanatical forms. Flaubert recognised the resemblance himself: both humorously, as in his self-chosen sobriquet of le Rev6rend Pere • Cruchard des Barnabites, directeur des Dames de la Des-illusion', and more seriously when he calls himself le dernier des Peres de l'Eglise' or writes* Moi, je deteste la vie; je suis un catholique, j'ai au coeur quelquechose du suintement vert des cathedrales normandes.' We recall Pascal. 'Ce n'est pas du travail; c'est la

Trappe', was the
Goncourt comment after seeing him at home
in his her-
mitage at Croisset. And they repeat the
legend that his
servant was only allowed to speak to him on
Sundays, to
say 'Monsieur, c'est dimanche.'

But why? Such a lifelong hate of life calls
for reasons to
justify it, even if the reasons may themselves
be often no
more than excuses for some sub-rational
impulse. The
Christian can say at least that he abhors the
world as full